

Bryn Mawr

Landmark Status Effort Seeks to Honor Pioneer

BRYN MAWR, Pa. — A legend familiar to every Bryn Mawr student surrounds one of the buildings at the heart of campus. M. Carey Thomas, the first dean and the second president of the college, is said to appear on moonlit nights and stroll in the cloister of the building that bears her name.

Now the building, Thomas Library, has gained wider attention. The National Park Service's advisory board, in a meeting at Olympic National Park in Washington State last week, approved a recommendation that the library be designated a national historic landmark, a spokesman for the agency said. A final decision is expected from Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan Jr. in June.

Collegiate Gothic Style

"A landmark building demonstrates national significance and exceptional integrity," said Page Putnam Miller, the director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, a nonprofit research group in Washington. Ms. Miller, who recommended and coordinated the nomination, said the building was singled out as part of an effort to identify sites that would give wider recognition of women's history.

Thomas Library was the apex of a building campaign by Thomas, who is credited with having introduced the collegiate Gothic architecture style to this country and who historians say gave Bryn Mawr its identity. Determined to create a college as academically rigorous as the best men's institutions, Thomas is seen as a pioneer in women's education.

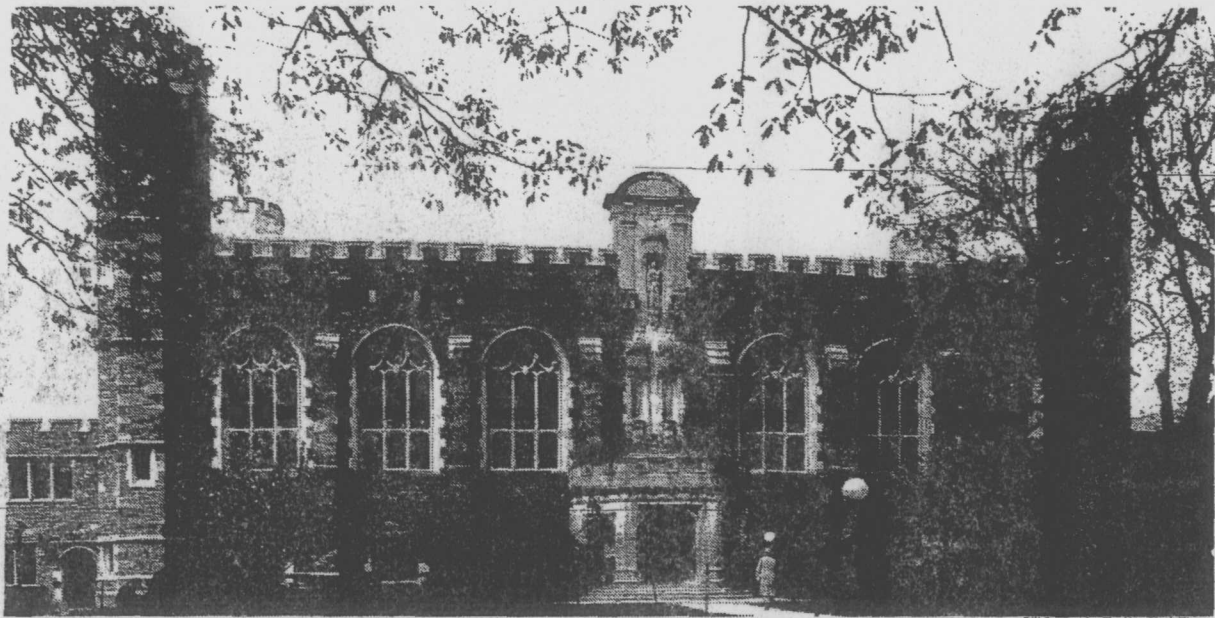
Thomas, saying it was crucial to provide an environment that would

stimulate intellectual pursuits, sought to re-create something of the stone and towers of Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England. Her career at the college saw the construction of seven buildings, starting with Radnor Hall in 1886, which was a transition from Victorian Gothic, and next with Denbigh Hall, which was built in 1889 in completely collegiate Gothic.

Thomas worked mainly with the architectural firm Cope & Stewardson, which built the bulk of Thomas Library from 1904 to 1907. Modeled on Oriel and Wadham Colleges at Oxford, the building's showpiece is the reading room of the previous library. Its cathedral ceiling is painted in a geometric Renaissance pattern, and tall lead-paned windows flood the room with light. "It's a very comfortable and elegant place to study," said Kora McNaughton, a senior in history from Bolinas, Calif.

Wings running from behind the reading room enclose a courtyard, or cloister, where Thomas's cremated remains lie under a commemorative plaque. An arched walkway, featuring carvings of grotesques by the sculptor Alec Miller, surrounds a grass lawn and fountain.

"We have a lot of outdoor festivities and traditions there," Ms. McNaughton said. "On nice days, people use it for sunbathing."



Bill Cramer for The New York Times

The M. Carey Thomas Library on the campus of Bryn Mawr College. Last week, the National Park Service's advisory board approved a recommendation designating the library as a national historic land-

mark. The building is named for school's first dean and its second president. Thomas is credited with having introduced the collegiate Gothic architecture style to this country.